



Theo Clinkard

VILLAGE

Touring 2025

Choreographer and designer, Theo Clinkard uses the paintings of 16th-century Flemish artist Pieter Bruegel the Elder as a point of departure for *Village*, a large-scale work where history becomes a way to reflect us back to ourselves and a cacophony of moving bodies, startling design and resonant song make for an urgent widescreen dance event.

Featuring an intergenerational cast of world renowned dancers, an additional cast of local young people and The London Bulgarian Choir, *Village* follows Clinkard's acclaimed company work *This Bright Field* (**** The Observer) and large-scale international commissions for Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch, Danza Contemporanea de Cuba and Candoco Dance Company.

Village is commissioned by Sadler's Wells, Theatre Royal Plymouth, Brighton Festival and Crawley Cultural Quarter. Creation and touring is planned for spring 2025 onwards, including performances at the brand new Sadler's Wells East in Stratford, London.

UK TOUR 2025

LONDON

[Sadlers Wells East](#)

PLYMOUTH

[Theatre Royal Plymouth](#)

BRIGHTON

[Brighton Dome](#)

POOLE

[Lighthouse Poole](#)

SALFORD

[The Lowry](#)

CRAWLEY

[The Hawth](#)

TRURO

[Hall for Cornwall](#)



BRUEGEL + VILLAGE

"Bruegel was radical for rejecting the practice of painting the courtly, as was the fashion of his time, and instead turned his attention to those right at the bottom of the social structure, offering us a window into the everyday and the local, through epic landscapes that are full of startling detail.

I think of him as an exceptional choreographer. His compositions appear chaotic, but upon closer inspection are dense with carefully considered gesture and behaviour, suggesting each character has a specific role to play and portraying community as a complex and diverse ecology.

For Village I intend to create a town square, a clearing, a place where people congregate. I imagine a village where the walls have collapsed and the whole spectrum of daily life is taking place simultaneously in one frame - someone, somewhere is navigating life's greatest sorrows while another revels in its joys. I want to build a whole emotional and urgent landscape from these intimate encounters and invite audiences to feel their way through the work. These paintings become a simple device to reflect us back to ourselves, questioning assumptions of the contemporary village.

Audiences will be situated up close to the performance area as wind machines, snow and a suspended canopy of light boxes capture the shifting cycle of a year, in reference to Bruegel's seasonal paintings. These immersive weather systems, together with the full throttle, atmospheric harmonies of the live choir and the 16 strong cast should make for a truly memorable event"

Theo Clinkard



CREATIVE TEAM

Direction / Design
Composition / Vocal arrangement
Choir leader
Creative Collaborator
Costume Collaboration
Lighting Design
Photography
Film

Theo Clinkard
James Keane
Dessislava Stefanova
Leah Marojević
Mary-Anne Buyondo
Zerlina Hughes
Camilla Greenwell
Roswitha Chesher

CAST

Village will be performed by a diverse intergenerational cast of 10 renowned professional dancers aged between 25 and 75. Performing alongside them will be 6 local young dancers and members of the London Bulgarian Choir, creating an onstage cast of around 30 people. Local choirs, positioned amongst the audience will join in for the work's unexpected final moments.

The cast includes....

Leah Marojević she/her	Jefta Van Dinther, Colette Sadler, Ola Maciejewska
Folu Odimayo he/they	Russell Maliphant, Holly Blakey, Punch Drunk
Stephanie McMann she/her	Oona Doherty, Damien Jalet, Serafine 1369
Lauren Potter she/her	DV8, Siobhan Davies, L.C.D.T., Eva Recacha
Alethia Antonia they/her	Russell Maliphant, Scottish Dance Theatre
Bun Kobayashi she/her	Olive Hardy, Vera Tussing, Pepa Upera
Temitope Ajose she/her	Lost Dog, Protein, Florence Peake, Megan Rooney
Adam Seid Tahir they/them.	Frederic Gies, Eleanor Bauer, Michael Keegan Dolan
Connor Scott he/they	Michael Keegan Dolan, Thick & Tight
Chris Bannerman he/him	L.C.D.T., National Ballet of Canada

R & D WATCH TRAILER

Trailer from R&D sharing at Sadler's Wells following one weeks development with the dancers and one day with the choir. Filmed and edited by Roswitha Chesher.







"Village brings improvisational practice to the large-scale narrative space. The frame is unashamedly theatrical, with light, sound, costume and weather effects working together to suggest a town square, a clearing, a world on stage. However, the cast in Village animate the space through dance scores; rather than devising character or engaging in acting, they activate the sensing, perceiving, imagining explorative body. This approach enables a world of behaviour and relationship that is grounded in the communicative body, celebrating the nuance and complexity of dance. As the choreographer, I will craft the dance's structure through compositional instructions but within that score, the dancers rewrite their journey and physical language anew each time, ensuring no two performances are quite the same"

Theo Clinkard



“One of those rare moments where I feel so fortunate to have witnessed the start of something really potent with potential to be truly wonderful. I found the collision of the remarkable dancers each so distinctive, in such a rich collaborative space with glimpses of the Bruegel-esque characters they might become and those spine tingling voices, both powerful and visceral. The emerging sense of a community on stage galvanised by the encounter between movement and voice and bound by the sensibility of Bruegel was compelling. I enjoyed the sense that like the paintings, there was no single point of focus, rather my eye could rove and settle on a detail or across the landscape of the community on stage.”

Theresa Beattie on the Village R&D sharing, April 2023



LONDON BULGARIAN CHOIR

We will be collaborating with 15 singers from the renowned London Bulgarian Choir. Led by Dessislava Stefanova, the choir will work together with composer James Keane and perform live onstage. The choir's past work includes recording three albums, working on the game *Halo 4*, collaborating with the band The Doves and singing on the award-winning *Virgin Queen* soundtrack. They also won the "BBC Radio 3 Open Choir of the Year" for 2006-7.

LOCAL CHOIRS

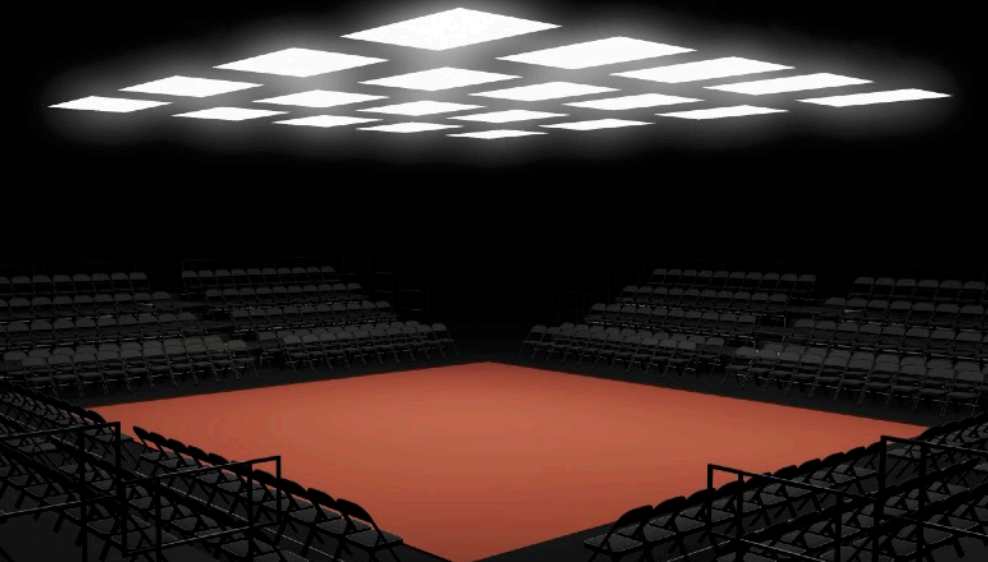
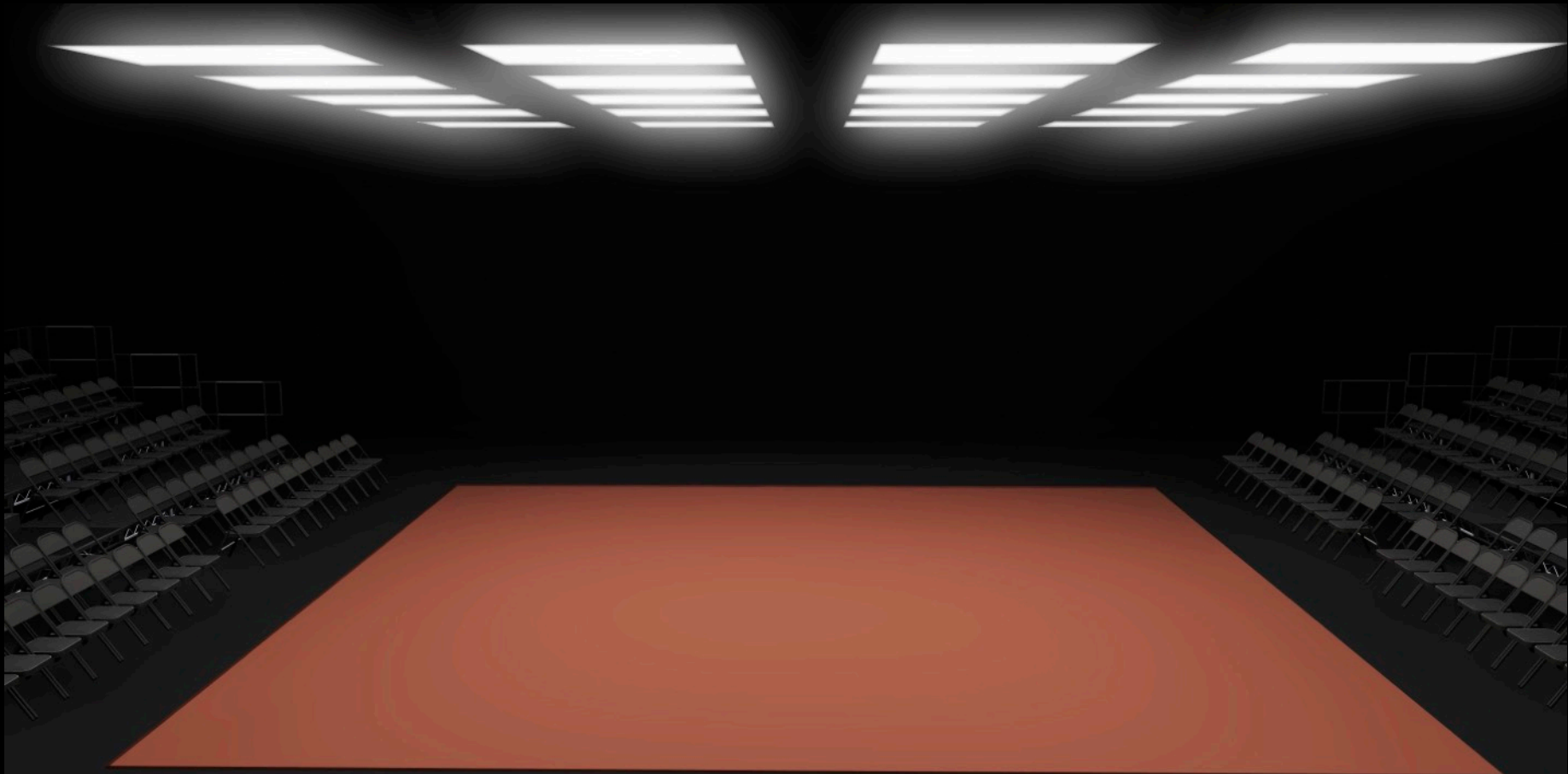
We will work with choirs local to each venue to bring them into a final section of the piece. The harmony singing that runs throughout the piece will unexpectedly transform into a sonic panorama via an additional cast of local singers sat amongst the audience, making for a spine tingling surround sound finale.

LOCAL YOUNG CAST

For each presentation of *Village*, we are working in partnership with local youth dance groups to find 6 exceptional young dancers aged between 11 and 15 that live near each presenting theatre. A tailored engagement programme will span the months leading up to each presentation to prepare the young cast to perform alongside the professional dancers. This approach will empower the young cast to develop the tools they need to enter the professional dance field.



STAGE DESIGN



- *Village* can be presented in a range of theatre and non-theatre spaces.
- The company will tour with a rich brown 10m x 10m dance floor. Variation on these dimensions is possible where needed.
- Audience will be positioned up close to the action, on 2 or 4 sides of the performance area.
- Depending on the venue, steep rostra can be used to seat the audience, replicating Bruegel's distinct use of elevated perspective.
- Lighting will be low technical demand. A suspended canopy of giant light boxes will evoke Bruegel's eerie diffused light, suiting non-theatre spaces and theatres alike.

LOCAL VILLAGES

Who makes up a modern Village? What do they do? How do they dress? How do they come together? What do they share?

As part of our research, we have been considering who makes up a village in 2023 and have devised an engagement strand that quite literally reflects us back to ourselves.

With an expanded idea of a village that recognises the many ways that we might live now, we will be inviting towns, suburbs, areas of cities proximate to the venue and in some cases, villages to come together for a group photo.

Using a drone to affect the elevated perspective that characterises Bruegel's work and a high definition camera, we will be asking 40+ people to gather for a choreographed group photo. Stylistically borrowing from Bruegel's staged physical compositions yet contrasted with contemporary clothing and current narratives.

The large format images will be displayed at the theatres and online.



Reference image: Ben Zank

‘Clinkard’s choreography has an unforced, unhurried quality that is very much of the moment. He muses, tinkers around with his material like a bloke in a shed, and then, quietly and deftly, pulls the loose ends together. The result is intimate, human-scale and charged with joy.’

The Observer on *Of Land & Tongue*





COSTUME

Created in collaboration with Mary-Anne Buyondo, Theo's costumes for *Village* will reference the volume and colour palate of Bruegel's characters whilst being updated to a contemporary aesthetic through the use of modern technical fabrics. We will be up-cycling offcuts from wetsuit manufacturers and collaborating with ethical brands.







THEO CLINKARD

Born in Cornwall and now based in Dartmoor, Devon, choreographer and stage designer Theo Clinkard has performed, created and toured contemporary dance across the world for 30 years, collaborating with artists from various disciplines including film, opera, theatre, performance and television.

Theo is fascinated by the communicative potential of the body and the empathetic potential of dance in performance. He seeks to create opportunities for memorable connection between audiences and his diverse group of dancers through working with attention, the senses and the imagination as a way to generate and articulate a landscape of feelings.

He launched his own dance company in 2012 and has steadily built an international reputation for creating affecting and visually arresting contemporary work with large-scale commissions for renowned companies such as Tanztheatre Wuppertal Pina Bausch, Danza Contemporanea de Cuba and Candoco Dance Company and creations for his own company, including the celebrated *This Bright Field* in 2017.

Movement Direction work includes *Aida* at København Opera, *Good Luck to you Leo Grande* starring Emma Thompson and *The Faggots and their Friends between Revolutions*, which opened this years Manchester International Festival.

Theo has designed for opera, theatre, dance and live art, including work with Sydney Dance Company, Skånes Dansteater, Scottish Dance Theatre, Scottish Opera, Opera La Scala and Malmo Opera.

Theo is an Associate Artist at Brighton Dome and Festival and an Honorary Fellow at Plymouth University.

‘Clinkard’s most recent work, is full of visual pleasures and surprises, but his overriding preoccupation is with the transmission of feeling.’

The Observer on *This Bright Field*





ACCESS

We are working with Access Consultant, Cathy Waller to scope out best accessible practice across *Village*; for the creative team, touring venues and audiences.

Having watched the R&D process & sharing, Cathy is assessing creative pathways for future rehearsals, creation periods, performance & touring processes.

This will ensure that *Village* can encapsulate & celebrate inclusion, making sure the work is accessible for all.

CONTACT

Producer

Rosalind Conlon rosalindconlonproducing@gmail.com

Artistic Director

Theo Clinkard theoclinkard@me.com

Website

www.theoclinkard.com

Facebook

[theoclinkarddance](https://www.facebook.com/theoclinkarddance)

Instagram

[@theoclinkard](https://www.instagram.com/theoclinkard)

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